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For Immediate Release
December 19, 2006
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Atlantic Seabee helps Iraqis build a better future

By Norris Jones
Gulf Region Central District

Fallujah, Iraq— He helps manage construction projects in one of the most volatile areas in Iraq. Navy Lt. Carl Kirar is working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in Al Anbar Province helping oversee projects that range from the installation of an \$80 million city-wide sewer system in Fallujah, to the construction of new schools for all age groups in Ramadi, to the repair and upgrade of power transmission lines serving the entire area. He serves as Deputy Officer in Charge of USACE's Al Anbar Area Office.

"While the strong dose of serving in one of this war zone's most dangerous areas has sometimes disheartened me, I have seen and met some very intelligent, motivated and heroic Iraqis trying to do what they can to build a better future for their families. There is hope in this country and our efforts here are supporting it," Kirar said.

He had high praise for the hundreds of troops who patrol that area. Every time I see young Marines and Army soldiers going outside the gate, I know they voluntarily put themselves in danger and routinely risk their lives for a cause greater than their own," Kirar said.

"U.S. forces have been working very hard to help out the Iraqis and USACE has recently taken more direct steps to understand their way of contracting by hiring Iraqi-American engineers who can bridge that cultural and language gap. All in all I have been humbled by the experience. Everyone here is working hard to help out the Iraqis, get them on their feet, and get us back home," he continued.

Kirar is working shoulder-to-shoulder with the First Marine Expeditionary Force to improve key essential services so Iraqis see that their government is working and things are getting better. "Both as a civil engineer and as a Navy Seabee, this assignment is one of the most professionally and personally rewarding of my career."

While his time in Iraq has been challenging, he's confident that somewhere down the road "the seeds of freedom we're planting will turn into shade trees of peace in the future." He notes that this is the first time he's been away from home for the holidays. "I've been fortunate over the years to always be able to come back to Shawano. I wish all those back home my best."



Navy Lt. Carl Kirar [ARMY PHOTO]

Kirar and his wife, Heidi, reside in Norfolk, Va., where he's assigned to Naval Facilities Engineering Command Atlantic.

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